

Scholarship in Caribbean history in recent decades has been concentrated heavily upon the exploitation of the region. The last quarter century has seen the production of a number of important monographs, new methodological approaches, impressive quantitative studies, general syntheses, and growing interest in scholarly interpretation. Issues and debates have focused attention on the nature and profitability of the slave trade and slavery, the rise and fall of the planter class, the changing structure and methods of trade, shipping, and finance, the role of the West Indies in the growth of metropolitan economies, the relative importance of economic and humanitarian factors in slave abolition and emancipation, and labor and other problems in the transition from slavery to freedom. Reasons for the heightened interest in Caribbean economic history include the need to understand the background of the gap between rich and poor nations, the need for a new consciousness of the region's history and culture in an age of national independence, and the growing ability to meet these needs on the part of universities, libraries, archives, and local history societies in the region. Notwithstanding the substantial body of scholarly publication, rich fields of research materials have been overlooked or underutilized, and much scope remains for synthesis and interpretation.

Eric Williams' seminal study, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill, 1944), has had a continuing influence on West Indian historiography. Williams attacks the notion that the abolition of the slave trade and slavery had been due to the humanitarian agitation and propaganda of the British abolitionists. He maintains that the commercial capitalism of the eighteenth century developed the wealth of Europe by means of slavery and monopoly. However, the rise of industrial capitalists in the early nineteenth century produced hostility to slavery and the Atlantic slave trade, especially in the dynamic British cotton industry. By this time plantation slavery in the British West Indies had become vulnerable to attack by its enemies, who, under the banner of laissez-faire, organized a political

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movement which destroyed the power of commercial capitalism and slavery.

Though Williams' book has gained favor among historians in the West Indies and West Africa, it has come under attack by certain historians in Britain and the United States. Roger Anstey claims that Williams uses evidence misleadingly and was not warranted in asserting that economic forces were predominant causes of abolition of the slave trade.¹ Anstey scales down Williams' estimates of the profits of the slave trade, regards the West Indian plantation economy as only marginally relevant to the process of capital formation in Britain, and maintains that abolition was motivated chiefly by the religious and humanitarian zeal of great numbers of Britishers.

After an extended period of research in the archives of Jamaica, R. B. Sheridan published an article entitled "The Wealth of Jamaica in the Eighteenth Century" (*Economic History Review*, 18, 2[1965]), which tends to support the Williams thesis. It presents statistical and other data, based chiefly on the sugar plantation economy of the island, which demonstrate that Jamaica was Britain's richest colony, both before and after the American Revolution. Sheridan estimates that from 8 to 10 percent of the income of the mother country came from the West Indies in the closing years of the eighteenth century. R. Keith Aufhauser has calculated that, on the eve of slave emancipation in 1834, slave capital in Barbados yielded a mean rate of return of close to 7 percent.²

On the other hand, R. P. Thomas and P. R. Coelho have criticized Sheridan's article, maintaining that the sugar colonies were, in practice, an economic drain on the mother country.³ They contend that, owing chiefly to the high costs incurred by Britain in protecting and governing the colonies, together with the tariff protection given to colonial sugar over the foreign product, the income of Britishers would have been higher in the absence of the West Indies from the empire. In a rejoinder to Thomas,

1. R. T. Anstey, "Capitalism and Slavery: A Critique," *Economic History Review*, 21, 2(1968), "A Re-interpretation of the Abolition of the British Slave Trade, 1806-1807," *English Historical Review*, 87 (1972), "The Volume and Profitability of the British Slave Trade, 1761-1807," in *Race and Slavery in the Western Hemisphere: Quantitative Studies*, ed. Stanley L. Engerman and Eugene Genovese (Princeton, 1975), *The Atlantic Slave Trade and British Abolition, 1760-1810* (Atlantic Highlands, New Jersey, 1975), and "A Note on J. E. Inikori, 'Measuring the Atlantic Slave Trade: An Assessment of Curtin and Anstey,'" *Journal of African History*, 17 (1976).

2. R. Keith Aufhauser, "Profitability of Slavery in the British Caribbean," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 5 (1974).

3. R. P. Thomas, "The Sugar Colonies of the Old Empire: Profit or Loss for Great Britain?" *Economic History Review*, 21, 1(1968); Philip R. Coelho, "The Profitability of Imperialism: The British Experience in the West Indies, 1768-1772," *Explorations in Economic History*, 10 (1973).

Sheridan argues that the colonies bore the major part of their governance costs, that tariff preferences were reduced substantially, and that the residual costs were more than compensated for by the indirect benefits of the sugar colonies to the empire.⁴ That the objectives of mercantilist policy included both economic and noneconomic goals is a reality which Thomas apparently had ignored.

Stanley Engerman, reacting negatively to the Williams thesis, has calculated that the slave trade contributed only about 1 percent to the national income of Great Britain, while the sum of the profit from the slave trade and from the West Indian plantations was less than 5 percent of national income in the early years of the Industrial Revolution.⁵ He admits, however, that his "static neo-classical model" cannot provide a favorable outcome for arguments such as those of Eric Williams.

In his monograph-length critique of the Williams thesis, Seymour Drescher investigates the "decline" thesis of British slavery,⁶ which was first advanced by Lowell J. Ragatz. Drescher attempts to show that the slave system expanded down to the eve of abolition in 1807, and that the West Indies and Africa were among the most dynamic areas of British trade. Drescher supports the humanitarian thesis, maintaining that the antislavery movement was a spontaneous social movement, which imposed its attitude upon imperial politics. Unfortunately, his book is faulted by its Euro-centric bias. For example, Drescher denies that the black revolution in Haiti spread fear among British planters or that imported African slaves constituted "seeds of destruction."

Partly in reaction to the Williams thesis, Philip D. Curtin published a book-length quantitative analysis of the Atlantic slave trade, which sought answers to such questions as how many slaves were transported, from what parts of Africa were they obtained, and to what destinations in the New World were they delivered?⁷ In particular, Curtin finds grounds to reduce the estimated total export of slaves from Africa to the New World by about one-half of previous estimates. J. E. Inikori examines the quantitative methods and data employed by Curtin and Anstey and finds that their estimates are substantially understated.⁸

4. R. B. Sheridan, "The Wealth of Jamaica in the Eighteenth Century," *Economic History Review*, 2d ser., 18, 2(1965); and "A Rejoinder," *ibid.*, 21, 1(1968).

5. S. L. Engerman and E. D. Genovese, eds., *Race and Slavery in the Western Hemisphere: Quantitative Studies* (Princeton, 1975); S. L. Engerman, "The Slave Trade and British Capital Formation in the Eighteenth Century: A Comment on the Williams Thesis," *Business History Review*, 46 (1972).

6. Seymour Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* (Pittsburgh, 1977).

7. P. D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, 1969).

8. J. E. Inikori, "Measuring the Atlantic Slave Trade: An Assessment of Curtin and Anstey," *Journal of African History*, 17 (1976): 197-223.

Michael Craton is the author of a short history of British slavery, which includes much useful data and analysis on the organization and economics of the slave trade and plantation slavery.⁹ R. B. Sheridan attempts to show how the Atlantic slave trade was influenced, both in Africa and the Caribbean, by changing agricultural systems, man-land ratios, demography, epidemiology, and systems of slavery.¹⁰

Slave plantation economies, with special reference to sugar, have been investigated by numerous writers. Two recent works by Carl and Roberta Bridenbaugh and Richard Dunn are concerned with the English West Indies in the seventeenth century.¹¹ In *No Peace Beyond the Line*, the Bridenbaughs maintain that all Englishmen went to the Antilles to get rich, worshipping Mammon all of the time and God only occasionally. In stocking their plantations with a vastly superior number of African slaves, they created an unprecedented situation with which they were ill-equipped to deal. Dunn, in his *Sugar and Slaves*, is more quantitative and analytical than the Bridenbaughs. He not only shows how the planters created a truly impressive sugar-production system, but also one of the harshest systems of slavery in Western history. Richard Pares's *A West India Fortune* is a classic account of the Pinney family's sugar plantation on the island of Nevis and their sugar factorage business in Bristol. Pares, along with Gabriel Debien, pioneered the use of family plantation papers. Other historians have used plantation records to reconstruct the story of individual planters and plantations.¹² In their *History of Worthy Park*, Craton and Walvin tell the remarkable story of a Jamaican plantation that has had a continuous existence since 1670 and has changed hands only three times.¹³ Sheridan's *Sugar and Slavery* focuses on the organization and

9. M. Craton, *Sinews of Empire: A Short History of British Slavery* (Garden City, New York, 1974).

10. R. B. Sheridan, "Africa and the Caribbean in the Atlantic Slave Trade," *American Historical Review*, 77, 1 (February 1972).

11. Carl Bridenbaugh and Roberta Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line: The English in the Caribbean, 1624-1690* (New York, 1972); R. S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill, 1972).

12. J. H. Bennett, *Bondsmen and Bishops: Slavery and Apprenticeship on the Codrington Plantations of Barbados, 1710-1838* (Berkeley, 1958), "Cary Helyar, Merchant and Planter of Seventeenth-Century Jamaica," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 21, 1 (1964), and "William Whaley, Planter of Seventeenth Century Jamaica," *Agricultural History*, 40, 2 (1966); R. S. Dunn, "A Tale of Two Plantations: Slave Life at Mesopotamia in Jamaica and Mount Airy in Virginia, 1799 to 1828," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3d ser., 34 (January 1977); C. Y. Sheridan, "Samuel Martin, Innovating Sugar Planter of Antigua 1750-1776," *Agricultural History*, 24, 3 (1960), and "Planter and Historian: The Career of William Beckford of Jamaica and England, 1744-1799," *Jamaican Historical Review*, 4 (1964); R. B. Sheridan, "Planters and Merchants: the Oliver Family of Antigua and London, 1716-1784," *Business History*, 13, 2 (1971).

13. M. Craton and J. Walvin, *A Jamaican Plantation: The History of Worthy Park, 1670-1970* (London, 1970).

operation of the British sugar colonies in the emergent Atlantic economy from their first settlement in 1623 to the American Revolution in 1775.¹⁴

Foremost among planter and slave historians of the West Indies is Gabriel Debien, whose writings on the French islands extend over the course of the last thirty-five years and include a total of 168 publications to the year 1975.¹⁵ Bad food and underfeeding, he finds, were the greatest evil of slavery, which led, in turn, to running away, theft, and harsh punishment. Debien's articles and monographs are based chiefly on family papers, including business correspondence and accounts. Elsa Goveia writes that his "use of private papers for illuminating the history of the slaves is undoubtedly his most important contribution to the historiography of French West Indian slavery."¹⁶

Elsa Goveia will be remembered for her publications and influence as a teacher and research director of West Indian history. Her *Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands at the End of the Eighteenth Century* (New Haven, 1965) is concerned not only with the slaves but with other elements of the wider society of which they were a part. Held together by principles of racial subordination and inequality, the slave society was characterized by excess numbers of slaves, a high dependency ratio, and costs of production which were inflated by debt, extravagance, absenteeism, and inefficiency.

Compared with Goveia, Orlando Patterson reaches quite different conclusions in his study of slave society in Jamaica.¹⁷ He regards Jamaica as "a monstrous distortion of human society," chiefly characterized by "the astonishing neglect" and perversion "of almost every one of the basic prerequisites for normal living" (p. 9). Patterson's chief contribution is in describing the social institutions of the slaves and the various ways in which they resisted slavery. While Patterson focuses attention on the slave society of Jamaica, Edward Brathwaite investigates both the white and black segments of Jamaican society.¹⁸ He views "white and black, master

14. R. B. Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775* (Barbados, 1974).

15. Space limitations prevent listing the works of Gabriel Debien which begin with *Une Plantation de Saint-Domingue: La Sucrierie Galbaud du Fort (1690-1802)* (Cairo, 1941), and end in 1974 with *Les Esclaves aux Antilles Françaises (XVIIe-XVIIIe Siècles)* (Basse-Terre, Guadeloupe, and Fort-de-France, Martinique, 1974).

16. Elsa V. Goveia, "Gabriel Debien's Contribution to the History of French West Indian Slavery," paper presented at the Third Annual Conference of Caribbean Historians, University of Guyana (April 1971), 46.

17. H. Orlando Patterson, *The Sociology of Slavery: An Analysis of the Origin, Development and Structure of Negro Slave Society in Jamaica* (London, 1967).

18. Edward Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1820* (Oxford, 1971).

and slave" not as "separate nuclear units, but as contributory parts of a whole," as "two cultures of people, having to adapt themselves to a new environment and to each other" (p. 307).

Cuban slavery and plantation economy have invited comparison with other slave societies. Following in the tradition of Frank Tannenbaum and Stanley Elkins, Herbert S. Klein published a comparative study of slavery in Cuba and Virginia.¹⁹ Contrasted with the arbitrary power of slave-owners in Virginia, Klein contends that Cuban master-slave relations were tempered by the intervention of priests and public officials. Franklin W. Knight challenged the Tannenbaum-Elkins-Klein thesis by demonstrating that the greater proportion of Cuban slaves who were attached to sugar plantations were overworked, underfed, and prone to disease and premature death.²⁰ He faults writers whose comparative studies of slavery neglect equivalent stages of economic and social growth and exaggerate the influence of metropolitan institutions.

Slave demography, which was pioneered by George Roberts,²¹ has become a vital field of research in recent years. Michael Craton contends that there was sustained progress toward a natural increase of the population, especially after the abolition of the slave trade.²² On the other hand, B. W. Higman finds fault with the argument that the slave population was likely to increase because of a better balance of the sexes and a growing proportion of creole to African slaves.²³ Higman's contribution is to show how the patterns of fertility and mortality varied between urban and rural slaves, crop types, size of slave holdings, labor requirements, disease environments, and other variables. The results of Stanley Engerman's research suggest that the mortality experience of creole slaves in the islands may not have differed as markedly from that in the United States as did

19. H. S. Klein, *Slavery in the Americas: A Comparative Study of Virginia and Cuba* (Chicago, 1967).

20. F. W. Knight, *Slave Society in Cuba during the Nineteenth Century* (Madison, 1970).

21. G. W. Roberts, "Movements in Slave Population of the Caribbean During the Period of Slave Registration," in *Comparative Perspectives on Slavery in New World Plantation Societies*, ed. Vera Rubin and Arthur Tuden (New York, 1977).

22. M. Craton, "Jamaican Slave Mortality: Fresh Light from Worthy Park, Longville and the Tharp Estates," *Journal of Caribbean History*, 3 (1971), and "Jamaican Slavery," in *Race and Slavery in the Western Hemisphere: Quantitative Studies*, ed. Stanley L. Engerman and Eugene Genovese (Princeton, 1975).

23. B. W. Higman, "The Demography of Slavery in Jamaica, 1817-34," paper presented at the Third Annual Conference of Caribbean Historians, University of Guyana (April 1971), "The Slave Population of the British Caribbean: Some Nineteenth Century Variations," in *Eighteenth Century Florida and the Caribbean*, ed. Samuel R. Proctor (Gainesville, 1976), and *Slave Population and Economy in Jamaica, 1807-1834* (London, 1976).

the fertility rates. Compared with the United States, he finds a longer interval between births in the West Indies, which is thought to be a carryover from African sources.²⁴

Trends in the writing of West Indian trade and shipping history include new quantitative data sources, refinements in data processing, use of family and trading-firm papers, histories of individual ports, colonies, regions, and comprehensive histories of interregional and Atlantic trade and shipping. The history of Port Royal, Jamaica, which was once the most powerful British center across the Atlantic, has been reconstructed.²⁵ Case histories of trading firms based on letter books and account books have been published.²⁶ Trade and shipping between North America and the West Indies in the age of the American Revolution have been analyzed.²⁷ For example, Shepherd and Walton have written a quantitative study of the maritime trade of the North American colonies, which contains much data and analysis of the important Yankee-Creole trade.²⁸ D. H. Makinson's monograph affords insight into the effects of world events upon the island of Barbados with special reference to its trade with North America.²⁹

More information is needed on the nature and extent of West Indian trade, shipping, and finance after the American Revolution. Recent studies include those by Dookhan on war and trade from 1783 to 1815,³⁰ Drake on Liverpool's trade with Africa and the Caribbean,³¹ Drescher on

24. S. L. Engerman, "Some Economic and Demographic Comparisons of Slavery in the United States and the British West Indies," *Economic History Review*, 2d ser., 29, 2 (1976).

25. D. J. Buisseret, "Port Royal, 1655-1725," *Jamaica Historical Review*, 10 (1973); W. A. Claypole and D. L. Buisseret, "Trade Patterns in Early English Jamaica," *Journal of Caribbean History*, 5 (1972); Michael Pawson and David Buisseret, *Port Royal Jamaica* (Oxford, 1975).

26. Richard Pares, "The London Sugar Market, 1740-1769," *Economic History Review*, 2d ser., 9, 2 (1956), "A London West India Merchant House, 1740-1769," in *Essays Presented to Sir Lewis Namier*, ed. R. Pares and A. J. P. Taylor (London, 1956), and *Merchants and Planters* (Cambridge, England, 1960); D. W. Thomas, "The Mills Family: London Sugar Merchants in the Eighteenth Century," *Business History*, 11 (1969).

27. Richard Pares, *A West India Fortune* (London, 1950), and *Yankees and Creoles: the Trade Between North America and the West Indies Before the American Revolution* (London, 1956); R. B. Sheridan, "The Plantation Revolution and the Industrial Revolution, 1625-1775," *Caribbean Studies*, 9 (1969).

28. James F. Shepherd and Gary M. Walton, *Shipping, Maritime Trade and the Economic Development of Colonial North America* (Cambridge, England, 1972).

29. D. H. Makinson, *Barbados, a Study of North American-West Indian Relations, 1739-1789* ('s-Gravenhage, 1964).

30. Isaac Dookhan, *A History of the Virgin Islands of the United States* (London, 1974).

31. Barry F. Drake, "Continuity and Flexibility in Liverpool's Trade with Africa and the Caribbean," *Business History* (Jamaica), 18, 1 (1976): 85-97.

the trade in sugar, coffee, and cotton,³² and Minchinton on the trade of Bristol and economic relations between metropolitan countries and the Caribbean.³³ Much more work remains to be accomplished on trade, shipping, and finance in the nineteenth century.

The transition from slavery to freedom in individual colonies and on a regional level has been a vital field of research in recent decades. Foremost among the historians of the transition is Douglas Hall, whose contributions to West Indian history and culture are manifold. In his *Free Jamaica*, he presents a detailed account of the island's economic development from 1838 to 1865.³⁴ He finds that while emancipation brought difficult problems it also unleashed a spirit of enterprise among all classes. The freedmen established interior towns, villages, and market places and came to constitute an important class of small farmers, peasants, and rural laborers. At the same time the sugar industry, though declining, was reorganized and brought under better management. Hall's study of five of the Leeward Islands illustrates some of the larger social, economic, and political problems of the period 1834–70.³⁵ He finds that the island's commitment to sugar production and an export-import economy in a period of secular decline led to a hardening of planter-labor relationships and class conflict, which culminated in the establishment of Crown colony government.

William A. Green attempts a new comprehensive assessment of the more than dozen Caribbean sugar colonies of Great Britain in the period from 1830 to 1865.³⁶ He is concerned with the relationship between colonial policy and the social and economic problems of slavery and emancipation. Green has also written on the apprenticeship period in British Guiana and the planter class.³⁷

Knowledge of Guyanese economic history has been greatly enhanced by the recent publication of two scholarly monographs. Alan Adamson explains how the hegemony of sugar came about and how it affected Guy-

32. Drescher, *Econocide*.

33. W. E. Minchinton, *The Trade of Bristol in the Eighteenth Century* (Bristol, 1957), and "The Economic Relations between Metropolitan Countries and the Caribbean: Some Problems," in *Comparative Perspectives on Slavery in New World Plantation Societies*, ed. Vera Rubin and Arthur Tuden (New York, 1977).

34. Douglas Hall, *Free Jamaica, 1838–1865: An Economic History* (New Haven, 1959).

35. Douglas Hall, *Five of the Leewards, 1834–1870* (Barbados, 1971).

36. W. A. Green, *British Slave Emancipation: The Sugar Colonies and the Great Experiment, 1830–1865* (Oxford, 1976).

37. W. A. Green, "The Apprenticeship in British Guiana, 1834–1838," *Caribbean Studies*, 9, 2(1969), and "The Planter Class and British West Indian Sugar Production, Before and After Emancipation," *Economic History Review*, 26 (1973).

anese society in the nineteenth century.³⁸ He finds that sugar monoculture exacted high social costs as it turned from African slaves to indentured laborers from India and drove out nonsugar industries. While Adamson's book covers the period from 1838 to 1904, that of Jay R. Mandle spans the century and a quarter from 1838 to 1960.³⁹ Mandle searches Guyana's colonial past for the roots of its underdevelopment. He attributes the underdevelopment to policies which were designed primarily to repress the growth of all sectors of the economy which would compete with the sugar planters for scarce labor and drive up wage rates.

The rise of a black peasantry after emancipation has been a field of lively investigation in recent decades. In a series of important articles, Woodville Marshall breaks new ground in analyzing the origin and stages in the growth of a peasantry in the British West Indies.⁴⁰ By means of persistent effort, both on an individual and cooperative basis, numbers of peasants managed to secure an independent existence through cultivation outside the dominant plantation society and sugar economy. Marshall observes, however, that plantation control of basic agricultural resources has severely restricted the advancement of the peasants.

Many historians have been concerned with the indentured immigrants from India and elsewhere who, to a large extent, manned the plantations after emancipation. Abundant information about the recruitment, transportation, labor contracts, and economic and social effects of the migration has been supplied.⁴¹

38. A. H. Adamson, *Sugar Without Slaves* (New Haven, 1972).

39. J. R. Mandle, *The Plantation Economy: Population and Social Change in Guyana, 1838-1960* (Philadelphia, 1973).

40. Woodville K. Marshall, "Notes on Peasant Development in the West Indies since 1838," *Social and Economic Studies*, 17, 3(1968), "The Termination of the Apprenticeship in Barbados and the Windward Islands: An Essay in Colonial Administration and Politics," *Journal of Caribbean History*, 2 (1971), "Aspects of the Development of the Peasantry," *Caribbean Quarterly*, 18, 1(1972), and "The Establishment of a Peasantry in Barbados, 1840-1920," paper presented at the Sixth Annual Conference of Caribbean Historians, University of Puerto Rico, Río Piedras (1974).

41. I. M. Cumpston, *Indians Overseas in British Territories, 1834-1854* (London, 1953); H. Johnson, "Immigration and the Sugar Industry in Trinidad During the Last Quarter of the 19th Century," *Journal of Caribbean History*, 3 (1971); C. Kondapi, *Indians Overseas, 1838-1949* (Madras, 1951); K. O. Laurence, "The Evolution of Long-Term Labour Contracts in Trinidad and British Guiana, 1834-1863," *Jamaican Historical Review*, 5, 1(1965), and "Immigration into the West Indies in the 19th Century," in *Chapters in Caribbean History* (Barbados, 1971); G. W. Roberts, "Immigration of Africans into the British Caribbean," *Population Studies*, 7, 3(1954), and *The Population of Jamaica* (Cambridge, England, 1957); G. W. Roberts and J. Byrne, "Summary Statistics on Indenture and Associated Migration Affecting the West Indies, 1834-1918," *Population Studies*, 20 (1966); G. W. Roberts and M. A. Johnson, "Factors Involved in Immigration and Move-

Linking the past with the present is the "new" school of political economy which is associated with the Caribbean New World Group at the University of the West Indies. New World economists contend that although slavery has been formally abolished for about five generations, the basic structure of the plantation society is today very much like that of slave days. In his model of the pure plantation economy, Lloyd Best attempts to explain the dynamics of change in Caribbean and other similar societies.⁴² He seeks to isolate the basic institutional, structural, and behavioral features which have served as a check on economic development. The interesting thing is that Best's model has been to a large extent inspired by Eric Williams' *Capitalism and Slavery*. Best finds modern counterparts to historical links between colonial and metropolitan economies that have perpetuated a condition of chronic commercial and industrial exploitation. George Beckford seeks to elaborate Best's model further to explain the dynamics of economic underdevelopment of plantation economies of the Caribbean and other Third World countries.⁴³ Beckford advances the hypothesis that the peasant sector of the economy has greater potential for growth than the plantation sector. Most remarkable is Beckford's assertion that the new foreign-owned multinational corporations, based on mining, manufacturing, and tourism, are operating essentially within the framework of the traditional plantation sector.⁴⁴

To be sure, there are lacunae in the literature of Caribbean economic history, as well as material which has been overlooked or underutilized previously. Three recent studies point to new directions in writing the history of the slave trade and slavery. In *The Middle Passage*, Herbert S. Klein has used demographic and other quantitative data in his analysis of

ments in the Working Force of British Guiana in the 19th Century," *Social and Economic Studies*, 23 (1974); Judith Weller, *The East Indian Indenture in Trinidad* (Río Piedras, Puerto Rico, 1968); Donald Wood, *Trinidad in Transition: The Years After Slavery* (London, 1968).

42. Lloyd Best, "Outlines of a Model of Pure Plantation Economy," *Social and Economic Studies*, 17 (September 1968).

43. G. L. Beckford, *Persistent Poverty: Under-development in Plantation Economies of the Third World* (New York, 1971), and Beckford, ed., *Caribbean Economy: Dependence and Backwardness* (Mona, Jamaica, 1975).

44. Beckford, *Caribbean Economy*; Havelock Brewster, "The Social Economy of Sugar," *New World Quarterly*, Dead Season/Croptime (1969); J. Bryden, *Tourism and Development: A Case Study of the Commonwealth Caribbean* (Cambridge, England, 1973); Norman Girvan, *The Caribbean Bauxite Industry* (Mona, Jamaica, 1967), and "Multinational Corporations and Dependent Under-development in Mineral Export Economies," *Social and Economic Studies*, 19 (December 1970); Norman Girvan and Owen Jefferson, eds., *Readings in the Political Economy of the Caribbean* (Kingston, Jamaica, 1971), and *Foreign Capital and Economic Underdevelopment in Jamaica* (Mona, Jamaica, 1972).

the trans-Atlantic slave trade of all the major European powers.⁴⁵ Jerome S. Handler and Frederick W. Lange employ the methodologies of archaeology, history, and ethnography in their *Plantation Slavery in Barbados*.⁴⁶ Michael Craton delves beneath the conventional sources in an effort to discover the lives of the slaves in his handsomely produced book, *Searching for the Invisible Man*.⁴⁷ He uses more than thirty slave lists from a plantation in Jamaica to provide biographical details for over thirteen hundred individual slaves. Moreover, he has interviewed ordinary country folk in search of modern perceptions of slavery and insights into the lives of slaves.

Much work remains to be done on the demographic and medical aspects of slavery. B. W. Higman is extending his work on the demography of slavery to the British Caribbean as a whole from 1807 to 1834, while Robert Fogel and Stanley Engerman are working with the slave registrations for Trinidad to see what can be said about fertility, mortality, physical growth, and occupations. R. B. Sheridan is studying the health and medical treatment of slaves with special reference to Jamaica. Though some progress has been made in discovering why slave deaths usually exceeded slave births, studies have been limited in time and place. The following are some of the questions that need to be answered. Prior to 1808, was it actually cheaper to buy new slaves from Africa than to encourage family life and reproduction on the plantations? How did the slave trade contribute to the morbidity and mortality of the slaves? How did the abolition of the slave trade effect the health and demographic performance of the slaves? Why was infant mortality so high? Can the insights from modern studies of malnutrition and children's diseases shed light on this question? Was the average slave's diet sufficient in quantity and quality? Did the amelioration laws contribute to better feeding and other improvements in the treatment of slaves? Did the European doctors who practiced in the West Indies tend to kill more slaves than they cured? Were the folk medical practices of the slaves more beneficial than European medical practices?

B. W. Higman believes that economic historians continue to be preoccupied with the external or institutional aspects of slavery. He thinks it is time to turn attention to the internal features of the system. "We need to

45. H. S. Klein, *The Middle Passage: Comparative Studies in the Atlantic Slave Trade* (Princeton, 1978).

46. J. S. Handler and Frederick W. Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados: An Archaeological and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1978).

47. M. Craton, *Searching for the Invisible Man: Slaves and Plantation Life in Jamaica* (Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1978).

study further the differential allocation of slave labor to particular resource uses," he writes, "the functioning of the internal slave markets, the economic costs of deciding slave occupations on the basis of demographic principles, and the resulting regional inequalities in slave prices. Even more than this, we need studies of the domestic economy of the slaves themselves, their attitudes to resource allocation, to saving money and patterns of consumption."⁴⁸ Jack Greene suggests that "scholars could profitably do a series of micro studies of the socio-economic organization, ethnic composition, and labour environments in localities through court records, wills, inventories, tithable lists, etc. comparable for what is being done in community and regional studies of portions of North America."⁴⁹

As noted, Gabriel Debien and Richard Pares pioneered the use of private plantation papers to illuminate the history of slavery and the plantation economy and society. Considering the numerous family papers which have come into the public domain during recent decades and the publication of guides to these and other records dealing with the British Caribbean colonies, it can be expected that monographs based on plantation papers will occupy a place of primary importance in coming years. Guides to archival materials have been published for individual family papers and for certain islands.⁵⁰

Moreover, private papers can supply valuable data for ascertaining the profitability of plantation agriculture. Among the questions that deserve consideration, according to Walter Minchinton,⁵¹ are the following: (1) How far was there a difference in profitability among different crops—among sugar and coffee and indigo, for example? How important were the differences in quality? (2) What effect did the size of plantation, equipment, quality of management, etc., have on profitability? (3) How important were variations between particular islands? (4) How far did location within a particular island affect the situation? (5) What shifts in long-run profitability occurred? (6) How did short-run fluctuations affect the profitability of a West Indian estate? (7) Did the presence or absence of the planter matter? Furthermore, were the profits abnormally large in the long run? What happened to them? Did they assist British industrialization, either directly or indirectly?

Much remains to be done on the economic history of the Caribbean region in the postemancipation era. From the vantage point of Barbados

48. B. W. Higman, "Economics of Circum-Caribbean Slavery," in Vera Rubin and Arthur Tuden, *Comparative Perspectives on Slavery in New World Plantation Societies* (New York, 1977), 143.

49. Letter from Jack P. Greene to the author.

50. Three sets of plantation papers are available on microfilm.

51. Minchinton, "Economic Relations," 571.

and the Cave Hill campus of the University of the West Indies, Woodville Marshall and his colleague, Frank Taylor, suggest the following topics and areas need investigation: (1) history of business houses: transnational combines as well as local conglomerates; (2) new industrial development in the region: oil, bauxite, tourism, telecommunications, transport, etc., particularly for the period after the late nineteenth century; (3) the minor staples: cocoa, coffee, citrus, bananas, rice, ganga; (4) migration during the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries: Panama and other parts of Central America, the United States, Aruba and Curaçao, the United Kingdom; (5) labor in the early twentieth century; (6) the fishing industry; (7) international trade: links with individual territories, scope and effect of trade agreements; (8) intraregional trade; (9) banking, insurance, and finance; (10) public sector policies; (11) history of economic thought in the region; (12) comparative economic history across the region. B. W. Higman suggests the need to study artisan skills and small-scale industry, using oral history and photographing techniques. Richard Lobdell's Ph.D. dissertation on the relationship between economic structure and demographic performance among the administrative parishes of Jamaica during the period 1891–1935 provides valuable methodological tools and far-ranging findings that promise to stimulate further work by economic historians. Briefly stated, Lobdell concludes that by contrast with plantations, "peasant organized production is more conducive to overall economic development because incomes are distributed in a more egalitarian fashion, because social stratification is less rigid and because political institutions are more responsive to local needs."⁵²

In his monumental *From Columbus to Castro*, Eric Williams maintains that the whole history of the Caribbean can be viewed "as a conspiracy to block the emergence of a Caribbean identity—in politics, in institutions, in economics, in culture and in values." He believes "the future way forward for the peoples of the Caribbean must be one which would impel them to start making their own history, to be the subjects rather than the objects of history, to stop being the playthings of other people."⁵³

52. Richard A. Lobdell, "Economic Structure and Demographic Performance in Jamaica, 1891–1935," Ph.D. dissertation (McGill University, 1975), 26.

53. Eric Williams, *From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean, 1492–1969* (London, 1970), 503.